

War Ends

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War Ends

by [Tolpen](#)

Summary

Abnur Tharn lets everyone know that he's had it up to here with their stupid Three Banner War and now that he has healed from the whole explosion of a floating island he sends each faction leader an invitation to the Imperial City to for once and for all settle who is going to be the Emperor.

Of course this is Abnur Tharn, how much do you trust him?

Notes

While written as canon "compliant" (based on the Rule of Imperial Magus's Body which says that if you haven't recovered the body of the mage, they probably aren't dead and will dramatically appear later), this work is firstly and foremost an extension of the Portal to Tamriel canon, a small AU of ESO roleplayers on Tumblr built on the premise of "My character might have died in canon, but they are much better now, oh and they have a blog."

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

“Your Majesty, a message for you.” The chamberlain presents the envelope on a silver tray with a gentle bow. Queen Ayrenn picks it up with her delicately manicured fingers, and the soft warm breeze of early autumn attempts to snatch the piece of creamy paper from her as it hurls large honey and amber coloured leaves before finally settling them on the ground.

“I have been told it is of the greatest urgency. The courier has just brought it,” the mer adds as an explanation of the slightly crumpled state of the envelope and dents and cracks on the thick red seal in the middle.

“We thank you, my chamberlain. This will be all.”

As the elf leaves, Ayrenn taps the envelope against her chin a few times. She was talking to Archmagister Galerion, but for the love of Auri-el, she could no longer recall what was the topic at hand.

The aforementioned Archmagister is politely trying to conceal his curiosity and not peek over the Queen's shoulder. “Perhaps if it is so urgent, I shall make myself scarce so you could read it in privacy.”

Then his curiosity gets the better of Vanus Galerion, he is a mage after all, and he discreetly glances at the envelope. Weren't it for his sudden paleness and fidgeting with the hem of his sleeves, Ayrenn would have been gracious enough not to comment in such a breach into her personal and state affairs by a person who might be close to her heart as a friend, but infinitely distant to her as a representative of a neutral party can be to a queen in a war.

“What is the matter, Archmagister?”

“That is, well... The envelope, it bears-”

“A Tharn family seal?” Emeric tries to again to snatch the paper from his wife, which would have been easier if he was willing to get out of the bed for it. Alas, Maraya holds it above her head, just a few inches out of his reach.

Centimetres, he reminds himself. The Empire uses the metric system which is decimal. If I am to become the Emperor, I have to get used to it.

“My love, if the Tharns sent me a letter, it is awfully politically important, and I need to read it *now*.”

“Emeric, I love you very very much and so does all your kingdom at at least third of the Covenant-”

“Ha!”

”-but I need you to get you cheese-white buttocks to get out of the bed and dressed.”

“Darling, please. My beloved pristine desert flower. Five more minutes.”

Maraya reaches down and pulls the blanket off him in a quick practised motion, leaving him exposed to the biting chill air, because his nightshirt has rolled up to his armpits, as nightshirts have the tendency to do. Emeric considers, as he has considered many times, reading a page not only out of Hammerfell classic poetry, but also of customs, and get himself at least one pair of those silk two-piece sleepwear, even though the idea of wearing trousers to bed seems absurd to him.

He isn't given the opportunity to continue this thought, because he is then yanked by his left ankle – that is good one, the one that hasn't been thrice dislocated, his queen is mindful of that – and pulled halfway out of the bed and into the air. Only his hands, shoulders and head are now on the mattress. Hadn't the nightshirt had its hem under his chin already, it would have right now. Two piece sleeping attire, now he has decided.

Emeric's hand blindly searches for the pillow to put it over his face again, but it is out of reach.

Maraya, already dressed and with her hair done, but still not with the powders and colours all over her face is intensely looking at him.

“You are very beautiful.”

“And you are practically naked. Do something about that.” As that is a statement that cannot be disputed, he indeed does get up and does something about his appearance while the High Queen of the Daggerfall Covenant reads him the letter. It is a great luck that he does not shave, because otherwise he would have accidentally slit his own throat with the razor.

“Ultimately settle the Imperial question...” Jorunn repeats again the sentence as he is stroking his rich beard in deep thoughts. Then he turns to his left: “Do you think it is a trick or a trap?”

“Yes.” Hadn't she just spoken, the tall woman with a Battleaxe by her side could be mistaken for a statue. A vividly painted, but a statue. Ever since the Skald-King cracked the seal and tore the fine creamy and somewhat bloodstained envelope open, she stood incredibly still. Her whole body was tense.

“I know you know Tharn, daughter of giants. What trickery is he planning?”

Eloquent as she is, she shrugs. Then, because to Jorunn one gets the easiest with flowery talk, she says: “I know a horker smell when it hits me in the nose, but whether it is shit or lard, that I can't really tell, and I would stomp into it only if I had really damn good boots. Abnur Tharn is a bastard, liar, and worse deceiver than any Daedra. He is going to scheme outrageous plans, lie until he chokes, and deceive all that speak to him.”

Jorun finishes his horn of mead just as Lyris falls silent again. Probably she has reached the conclusion that if she speaks any more, it is going to be a language too foul to have at breakfast table, as it might wake violent appetites. At least, that is what Jorunn thinks the cause of the sudden end of Lyris's explanation to be. He decides for a little test: “You sound like you are fond of that man.”

His solution to great many a problem visibly bristles and her grip on the battleaxe tightens. When she speaks, it is slowly and through gritted teeth: “If you want me there as your bodyguard, you're not going to spout such nonsense again... Your Majesty.”

Interesting...

“I didn't say I am going. Or that you are to go with me.”

If she had looked at him, he knows, it would be the exasperated look of a woman thinking that she knows that he knows that she is not that stupid, so if he could stop being an ass. Blessed by Kyne and Mara is going to be the man who gets Titanborn's hand in a wedding. Or a blessed woman, although Jorunn didn't think Lyris to be of that inclination.

Alas, the half-giantess is staring straight ahead of herself still. Then, as slow as a moving iceberg cracking away from the continent to sink thousands of ships she takes the first step around the table and heads out of the dinning hall. She doesn't even turn around when she says: “I'll tell the housecarl to start packing.”

Queen Khamira fans herself with the letter, briefly glad that she did not tear it to million little

peaces and then didn't tore those pieces to even smaller pieces. By Khenarti, if this morning is so hot, the day is going to be even worse.

Prefect Calo, General Renmus, Captain Sai Sahan, and Zamarak who does not hold any official military title and is extremely proud of that, enter the room, in this order. Only Calo visibly relaxes in the still somewhat cool rooms of the palace, or cooler than the outside at least. All four men are sweaty enough to glisten.

The other three aren't as relaxed, because they stare at her. Khamira has decided that she is not putting on the royal regalia or any uniform unless she absolutely and unavoidable has to, and thus she is nearly naked, while the men are steaming in their own juice underneath their uniforms.

The Prefect salutes her. "Your Majesty, you called. How may we be of service?"

"I am in need of armed escort."

"Where to?"

"How many?"

"When?"

"What for?"

Those were Calo, Renmus, Sai, and Zamarak, in this order, although they spoke all practically at once. Khamira's sensitive ears still tell their voices apart.

"Tomorrow," she purrs, "to Cyrodiil. I was thinking sixteen, I am not a conquering soldier, merely a representative, swift like a hackwing, not a brute terrorbird. I have no doubt Ayrenn is going to bring an army or two with her."

The three whose questions have been answered scatter to carry out the order. The Captain of the Dragonguard, however, he lingers. His brow wrinkles in frown, and even his beard, which Khamira has the horrible urge to bat at with her hands, moves in confusion around his lips.

"To Cyrodiil? Why to Cyrodiil? You are not joining the war personally, are you? No, no, of course not. You would have wanted an army for that, and you want just sixteen people for an escort. I admit that I do not understand."

Khamira lazily stretches and feels the each individual small bone in her spine pop into the right place. It makes his shiver in a little pleasure. "I have no intentions of becoming the next cat warming the Emperor's red cushion, nor an interest of becoming the Emperor myself. No, I just want to make it known to that old fool of a wizard that he should have written sooner. Or at least let us know."

Sai Sahan is quiet for a while, as goes over her words over and over until he is certain he understands the entirety of what she has and hasn't said. It looks like he is smiling when he asks: "In that case it would be a great honour to accompany you."

Fahara'jad watches the road from the palanquin as he thinks about what kind of a man Abnur Tharn is. He has heard about him, read about him, but never met him. A collaborator of the Worm Cult. Half of the reports claimed that he sold the Empire to Mannimarco for a taste of power, a decisions which he might and might not have regretted, and the other half claimed that he had manipulated the Soulburst to happen in the first place to eventually gain power over all of Tamriel. Fahara'jad

was not that sure about either of those claims. He thought the High Chancellor did what was necessary; an Empire surrendered is an Empire spared.

The palanquin shakes; the cleared road through the Imperial City leads through a house. The King of Hammerfell recognizes ruins in the shape of a marble fireplace, and a structure which once was a stair. No walls to be seen, but to the right the scorched arch of a doorway can still be made out. The White-Gold Tower looms above them like... like something very looming.

General Thoda has been looking at his king for some time, and his horse lines up next to the king's palanquin. "What is on your mind, Your Majesty? You seem to be in a philosophical mood."

"My thoughts revolve about the interesting coincidence of how many prominent members of the Tharn family who had a known connection to the Order of the Black Worm have been lost very shortly after the Planemeld."

"I would hate to disagree with you, but I dare to say that they weren't lost." The horse neighs at that.

Fahara'jad shifts his position, carefully not to set off balance the palanquin-bearers. His left leg has been threatening to go numb and he would hate to hop around the palace at the heart of the city with the feeling of biting ants from knee down. "Oh, of course, they have been found very shortly after their disappearance. Each of them all over the place. It makes one think a lot about their patriarch who I am to meet shortly." A pause. "I value your insight and distractions. What is on your mind?"

"Coincidentally, also the High Chancellor Abnur Tharn."

He asks with a spark of interest in his eyes: "And what conclusions have you reached?"

The General pouts slightly and pats the side of the neck of his horse which neighs again. "I think he has a sense of humour so dark that not all lanterns in Nirn would be able to shed a slice of light into it."

"What does tell you so?"

"He's had this road cleaned and cleared of debris, but we've already marched through three houses at the very least. I saw a gaping maw of an infernal abyss opened in a hideous grin across the main road on which we are not walking; it was surrounded by a hastily made stick-and-rope fence and the sign of roadwork. But most of all it is the garlands that get to me."

Fahara'jad looks out and up above them. He sees nothing wrong with the garlands, although they once vibrant colours have been badly damaged by war and weather. When he glances quizzically back at General Thoda, the soldier is wearing a smirk as kind as the Knathean flu. He explains simply: "They were made from the banners of the three Alliances. I would propose a bet that if there were any children left in this city, there would be a singing choir of them to greet us, too."

Heita-Meen is not happy with any of this. Yes, yes, she speaks for for the Argonian tribes in the Ebonheart Pact. No problem with that, the Hist wills it. But no one told her that it makes him a candidate for an Emperor! Not that she is overly worried about it; humans would never take an Argonian for their ruler. An elf maybe. But any of the beastfolk? Don't be ridiculous.

That is also why she isn't surprised when at the entrance hall he runs into two very fancy elves. Altmer. One has the headdress that is depicted on the Queen of Dominion, and the other is wearing

the robes of the Mages Guild. As all mer and human look the same to Heita-Meen, she decides that these two are their recognisable features.

The she-elf, presumably Queen Ayrenn is sternly staring at the desk, which is the only unbroken and inanimate object in the room, solid dark wood in contrast with the pale... marble? Probably a marble. It seems a ridiculous thought for the tower to be actually made of white-gold. And it doesn't feel like metal.

Heita-Meen discreetly coughs to make her presence known. "I erect the spine of-"

"Hold a moment," says a voice of someone who is obstructed from Heita-Meen's field of view by Ayrenn. By the voice it is another mer. Dryskins would describe the voice as pleasant, to Argonian scales it was mucky and slippery. This particular made the Vicecanon and Speaker for Tribes in one person to nickname its bearer as Talks-Like-Snake.

Talks-Like-Snake peeks around the Dominion Queen, who has still not ceased to stare at him? Flat chest. Him. "I'll get to you in a moment, I just need to handle the papers here first. Do you know how much Tharn loves his papers? He could make it a religion.

"Don't tell him that," says the mage. "None of us need him to start his own cult. We never know who might get jealous if he ran it well enough."

"Are you two still flirting?" Ayrenn sounds tired. She looks tired, too, when she turns to the mage. The bags she has under her eyes are big enough to pack for a trip around the Black Marsh. Heita-Meen feels for her, being surrounded by stuffy High Elves has to be exhausting, let alone being one...

Weaves-Magic turns bright red as blood rushes into his golden cheeks, and Talks-Like-Snake doesn't dignify her question with an answer. Instead he curtly hands her a bunch of leaflets with a very bright smile saying: "You are all set. Take the stairs to the top, then go left. You cannot miss the meeting chamber, it is the first door on the right, the only room that still has a door. Have a nice stay. And you, Vanus... up the stairs, too, and on your right will be a broom closet. I'll catch up with you later."

Vanus Weaves-Magic becomes a honorary Bright-Throat as his blush spreads and practically flees the room, while Ayrenn attempts to conceal a chuckle and heads towards the staircase in his footsteps.

The remaining elf behind the desk stands up from his chair and gives Heita-Meen his charming smile. She is not fooled, however, because his eyes hold the desire to murder her, those who came before her, and those who will come after her. A sign of a greeting clerk.

"I erect the spine of welcome," he tries. "Are you here for the Ruby Throne meeting?"

"Um, yes."

"Great! Please, find your name here and cross it out." He shows her a form. Vicecanon Heita-Meen is there almost at the top, which flatters her greatly. She strikes her name out, there aren't many people yet to arrive left, the King of Daggerfall, the Queen of Elswyr, and Indoril Gelds.

Talks-Like-Snake snatches the quill out of her hand before the ink can even dry, and requests her to take off all her weapons.

"All of them?"

"Yes. All of them. No weapons are allowed past this room. I'll give you a form for them, so you can pick them up on your way out and not confuse them with the others' crude tools."

Heita-Meen begins to understand why the mer wishes to spill blood and what took the elf queen so long. After disarming herself she is given her own leaflets, instructions where to go, and an insincere wish to have a nice stay.

On the top of the stairs she notices Vanus waiting by the broom closet. She waves at him. He returns the gesture, a bit confused before the realization what proposition she has overheard hits him. Vicecanon Heita-Meen, Speaker for the Tribes, disappears in the meeting room before the mer's blush reaches the tip of his ears.

King Camoran Aeradan does his best to sit still. The padding of the armchairs doesn't agree with him, he doesn't trust any single person in this room besides Queen Ayrenn and Queen Khamira, and the worst part: He has to sit up straight. He'd love to pull his legs up, perhaps slump to side a bit. Or sit on the table, on solid wood.

High Chancellor Abnur Tharn is overly polite as he speaks. Camoran isn't really listening to the man when he rubs in the terrors and cost of the war for all sides. He isn't helping himself to the little refreshment on the table, because he doesn't trust that either. Y'ffre take the Green Pact, that is not his reason, he fears poison.

Since his attention is all over the place, he is seemingly the only one who notices two elves, slipping into the room. One is Vanus Galerion. The other is the one Camoran labelled as Tharn's secretary who had greeted him at the entrance and took his weapons. Both are out of breath, both have smug smiles, and the secretary has a bruise on his neck, and his previously impeccable eyeliner work has been smeared beyond all recognition.

Subtle as a hoarvoar on a bear.

No, Tharn noticed them too: "Very kind of you, Archmagister Galerion, to grace us with your presence, but I was just about to order everyone who is not directly interested in the Ruby throne out of the room. Unless your intentions have changed..."

"Oh no. No, they have not. I shall wait outside."

"And the same goes for the rest of you. If this does not concern you, leave the room."

The two Altmer lovebugs clear the room. All the manner of bodyguards and armed escorts follows them. Soon there are only eleven people left around the table. It should be just ten, but House Hlaalu has refused to be represented by someone outside of their family, and as such the Dunmer get to have two people here instead of just one like everyone else.

How preposterous, he indulges that thought further. *If everyone acted like this, Elsweyr would get one representative for each of its kingdoms. We wouldn't fit in this room.*

"Are you with us, Camoran Aeradan? What heavy fog clouds your mind that it inconveniences all of us?"

Damn you Tharn, why do you have to sound like my father scolding me over an unfinished meal? Not that he says it out loud or admits a verbal defeat. He answers the question simply: "Merely wondering why the Mane of the Khajiit," here he pointedly ignores numerous scoffing around the table, "is not present at this meeting too. I can't shake the feeling this is all happening behind someone's back."

"I wrote to the Mane," Tharn replies curtly. "Not a spiritual matter, not her business, that is what I

have been told about it.”

“Enough,” Casimir slams the table with his keg. He's had quite the amount of ale by now, because he seems the youngest around the table and probably needs to give himself some courage. Camoran is of the opinion the man has overdone it in that regard. “You squawk here like chickens. What is this *really* about? Sure, the Ruby Throne, I've heard that at least seven times today. But I mean what is *this* about?”

Tharn looks at the unfortunate monarch as if he has just chewed a graht oak root. “If you demand me to be blunt, very well, I shall humour you. This idiotic war of yours is not going to end until amidst the bloodshed stands one undeniable victor. I say: It is your personal business. Leave the soldiers out of it.”

There is a flash of red light above the table. Two daggers hang in the air, suspended there by the invisible but almost tangibly present forces of magic. The instruments, despite being heavily ornate, make their purpose clean; they are tools of killing. The perfect shape for slitting throats stabbing kidneys.

Tharn, unbothered by everyone's suddenly shocked face, inspects his nails as he says: “I shall await my new Emperor or Empress in the library should you need me.” He leaves the room after that.

The daggers hang in the air for another moment, and then the magic releases them, dropping them on the table. One weapon immediately drowns in the thick custard. Almost everyone is watching its lines disappear in the thick pale-yellow milky sweetness.

On Camoran's left a chair screeches as it is moved away from the table; Khamira stands up and graces the still stunned company with the smile of a feline on a prowl: “Well, this all has been very interesting. I was exceptionally disgusted to meet some of you.”

Bazrag, on whom Camoran has a good view since he is sitting right across him, tilts his thick Orsimer head to side: “Isn't it a little late to run to the outhouse now?”

“For you perhaps,” Khamira purrs. There are choked chuckles to be heard. “But the old wizard said that whoever is not concerned should leave, yes?”

Camoran finds himself running for the door before Khamira's tail gets out of his sight with a relief he has never felt in his life before.

“Really a shame Varen that you can't see them leaving.”

“Don't sound so happy about it. They'll be back with bigger armies.”

Abnur Tharn concludes that his nose has finally stopped acting up and that he can safely drink from his cup without the risk of spoiling his tea with blood. Titanborn had a lot on her mind to share with him, and her language still remains to be largely physical.

In the corner of the library is Vanus fussing over the bloodied face of his boyfriend who is very much insisting that it is fine and that he had it coming.

“That was Emeric's convey,” notes Khamira, who has also joined them for the tea. “That leaves only Rayveth Hlaalu and Indoril Gelds.”

“Kchm. I do not expect them to be leaving,” Tharn waves his hand without a care, and pours himself another cup of tea before sinking into an armchair. He crosses his legs, but only when

Varen pokes his foot with the tip of his heavily carved cane, he elaborates: “They are House Dunmer, obviously they are the ones who actually try to kill each other. I am not taking chances either of them survives it. The only shame is that Jorunn put that custard in the middle of the table. Now it is going to be full of poison too. I was really looking forward to the custard.”

Sai groans as Lyris takes his money pouch with a victorious grin.

End Notes

Blogs to visit for some context:

<https://guildmaster-galerion.tumblr.com/>

<https://honored-worm-king.tumblr.com/>

<https://the-tharns-speak.tumblr.com/>

<https://mystery-ticking.tumblr.com/>

<https://warpoetrydivinity.tumblr.com/>

<https://your-uncle-sheogorath.tumblr.com/>

<https://khajiit-of-mystery.tumblr.com/>

<https://yourwrits-mybusiness.tumblr.com/>

<https://nameless-mothpriest.tumblr.com/>

I am not a bitch and I am not luring people in on the Vannimarco tag. But Portal to Tamriel knows who that "secretary" is.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!